

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF CT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Dear members of the Connecticut Human Services Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Alberto Perez and I live in Connecticut. I'm in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS because it seems to me a step forward to get HUSKY health insurance for the whole immigrant community.

In 2020, when the pandemic started, my wife told me to go to the dentist for a cleaning. Every time we go to the doctor I have to pay, and I'm the only one who works at home and I have to carry the expenses. I don't like to ask for anything from the state. I feel that I am here to get ahead, not to be supported. But it is difficult for me to pay for insurance for the whole family. When I went to the dentist I had a checkup and they told me I had a white spot that they didn't like. They sent me to Hartford Hospital for tests. They told me that, from the x-rays, it could be something serious, or maybe not. They sent me to cancerology, but I waited because I knew I would get the bill. They told me that if I had inflammation, I should come back. After a month and a half I went back because it was very inflamed. They did a biopsy and sent me to cancerology. They found a tumor in my mouth. It was not malignant but it had grown 5 millimeters. They sent me to UConn for surgery. I told her that I didn't have insurance and that I couldn't afford the \$40,000 they said it would cost. She told me that I needed to have the surgery, that the tumor was eating my bone. She sent me an application so I could ask for help. I had to wait for them to approve it, and I had to wait a while to see if they would help. They were able to pay the bill for the operation but I had to pay for the anesthesia and other things. There were also other bills for the tests, the biopsy, things like that. In total it was \$4000.

Having insurance is essential. You can't get checked often because of the cost. My wife also has a ball in her leg and because of the bill she has not wanted to be checked. We don't know if she is going to have surgery, we don't know how much it will cost. My daughter is 15 years old and we owe \$5000 for her dental treatment. We are paying monthly for everything, as we can. We have to try to figure out how to pay for it.

Please support S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. If one could have access to insurance, it will avoid getting to the point where the disease gets worse. If I had gone for check-ups, maybe what is happening to me would not have happened. Now I don't have half of my mouth and it's hard for me to eat. If you improve access to health insurance for immigrants, you can avoid situations like mine.

Thank you,
Alberto Perez